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ELECTIONS 2008

Speeches and Presidential Elections

After Barack Obama's [A More Perfect Union](#) speech there was wide agreement on the importance of the speech for his campaign. His speech, covering the history of race relations in America, came as an attempt to resolve the controversy associated with sermons from his pastor, Jeremiah Wright. Obama's rhetorical talents have had a great impact on the success of his campaign so far. Hillary Clinton's most recent speeches included substantive policy proposals on mortgages and affordable and accessible health care; proposals which have been called bold and progressive by commentators.

The designated Republican Presidential candidate, John McCain, call himself "a realistic idealist" who in his own words has been shaped by "hard experience and the judgment it informs." McCain reinforces his impressive biography with a ["Service to America" speech tour](#) to places associated with his own, and his family's, service to the United States.

Will the ability to inform, educate and inspire people in a speech be decisive in this year's presidential election?

Campaign 2008: Speeches

- ❖ **Barack Obama:** [A More Perfect Union](#), March 18, 2008, Philadelphia: "[...] Of course, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution -- a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time. [...]"
- ❖ **Barack Obama:** ["Yes, we can change"](#) - Remarks after South Carolina Democratic Presidential Primary victory.
- ❖ **Barack TV:** Videos of [speeches](#) and [TV ads](#)
- ❖ **Barack Obama Announces his Candidacy** for the Democratic Nomination for President in 2008 - [Speech](#) (transcript and video)
- ❖ **Hillary for President:** [Speeches](#)
- ❖ **Hillary TV:** [Videos of speeches and TV ads](#)
- ❖ **Hillary Clinton's** [March 4 Speech](#) (transcript of the senator's speech to supporters after the March 4 nominating contests)
- ❖ **John McCain's** [Remarks to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council](#), March 26, 2008
- ❖ **John McCain:** [Remarks on New Hampshire Primary Victory](#)
- ❖ **John McCain:** [Speech on Iraq](#)

Links Online Speech Bank: [American Rhetoric](#)
 Merriam Webster: [Rhetoric](#)

Memorable Convention Keynote Addresses

Barack Obama's famous keynote address ["The Audacity of Hope"](#) (text & audio file) to the 2004 Democratic convention in Boston lasted 15 minutes and put him on the national political map. Many commentators said that the then Illinois Senate candidate "hit every note."

Barbara Jordon's [keynote address](#) (text & audio file) to the Democratic National Convention, July 12, 1976: Scholars cite Barbara Jordon's eloquence, power and masterful delivery, as well as the historical importance of the first keynote by an African-American woman, when pointing out that her speech is among the most significant [American political speeches](#) of the 20th century.

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Memorable U.S. campaign speeches:

- Abraham Lincoln's ["House Divided" Address](#), June 16, 1858
- Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1936 convention speech ["Rendezvous with Destiny"](#), June 27, 1936
- [John F. Kennedy: Opening Statement, First Presidential Candidate Debate](#), Sept. 26, 1960
- Ronald Reagan's 1980 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address ["Time to Recapture Our Destiny"](#)
- George H.W. Bush's call for a ["kinder and gentler nation."](#) 1988 Republican National Convention Acceptance Address, Aug 18, 1988

Teaching Resource

PBS NOW: [Persuasive Writing - Take a Stand](#): The ability to state ideas clearly and back them up with proof is increasingly important, regardless of one's profession, age or background. New technologies such as blogs, podcasts, instant messaging, virtual social networks and email make opinionated self-expression easier and more encouraged than ever before. At the same time, learning to distinguish reputable sources of information from inaccurate sources is challenging, yet important when making credible arguments. Learning how to recognize and use credible resources to form opinions and support them is a skill used by everyone.

Article

BUSH-CLINTON FOREVER?

Kristof, Nicholas D., New York Times Upfront, March 10, 2008: "If Senator Hillary Clinton is elected President and serves two terms, then the presidency will have been held by a Bush or a Clinton for 28 years." In this article the author examines if American democracy will diminish if Americans keep the presidency in the same two families that have held it since 1989.



[Youth Radio: Election 2008](#)

This site follows the 2008 U.S. presidential election "around the country, through the perspectives of young people who are getting a close-up view of the process." It features youth reporting on candidates, primaries, fundraisers, and other election topics.

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NEW ON THE WEB

INTRODUCING

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Lesson Plan: [The Language of Deception](#) It's a phased withdrawal, not a retreat. Except that the terms actually mean the same thing. But "retreat" sounds much worse, so savvy politicians avoid using it. That's because they understand that there is a difference between the cognitive (or literal) meaning and the emotive meaning of a word. This lesson examines the ways in which terms that pack an emotional punch can add power to a statement; and also ways in which emotive meanings can be used to mislead, either by doing the reader's thinking for him or by blinding her to the real nature of the issue. Students will learn to distinguish between different uses of language and analyze the emotive impact of words.

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